

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USNATO

S E C R E T OSLO 1233

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR NO UR US SV

SUBJ: POSSIBLE U.S. STEPS TO STRENGTHEN NORWEGIAN

SOVEREIGNTY IN THE SVALBARD/BARENTS SEA AREA, PART I

REF: OSLO'S 1018 PARA 3E

BEGIN SUMMARY. I BELIEVE NORWEGIANS MAY NOW WISH TO DISCUSS WITH US MORE SERIOUSLY QUESTION OF OUR ROLE IN ASSISTING THEM TO RESIST LONG-TERM SOVIET PRESSURE TO ESTABLISH HEGEMONY OVER AND SPECIAL TREATMENT ON SVALBARD AND IN THE BARENTS SEA. EVEN IF THE NORWEGIANS DO NOT INITIATE THE DIALOGUE, IT MAY BE IN OUR INTEREST TO DO SO. BEFORE WE BECOME INVOLVED, HOWEVER, WE WILL NEED TO KNOW THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD VARIOUS POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION.

ACTION REQUESTED: APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S EVALUATION OF THE FEASIBILITY AND DESIRABILITY OF THE U.S. TRYING TO STRENGTHEN NORWAY'S SOVEREIGNTY IN THE NORTH BY VARIOUS SPECIFIC STEPS WHICH ARE DISCUSSED IN SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

1. IN MY MARCH 8 DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO THE USSR, HE TOLD ME HE WISHED TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF SVALBARD AT GREATER LENGTH LATER--BY WHICH I ASSUMED HE MEANT AFTER THE BRATTELI VISIT. I HAVE THE IMPRESSION FRYDENLUND HAS NOT YET

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FORMULATED HIS OWN THINKING ON NORWEGIAN POLICY TOWARD THE

USSR IN THE NORTH AND WHAT THE U.S. ROLE COULD USEFULLY BE. (THIS MAY EXPLAIN WHY AT OUR MEETING, HE QUICKLY DISCOURAGED DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS VIBE FROM EXPANDING A BRIEF DISCUSSION ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF GREATER U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE NORTH.) WE KNOW, HOWEVER, FROM CONVERSATIONS WHICH WE HAVE HAD WITH VIBE, WITH TWO EX-MOSCOW HANDS, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR LEGAL AFFAIRS ELIASSEN AND POLAR ADVISER BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN, WITH DIRECTOR OF NANSEN FOUNDATION, FINN SOLLIE AND WITH INFLUENTIAL RESEARCH DIRECTOR AT FOREIGN AFFAIRS INSTITUTE, JOHAN HOLST--THAT THERE IS WIDESPREAD INTEREST AMONG FOREIGN POLICY EXPERTS IN SEEING SOME INCREASED U.S. ROLE IN THE NORTH TO COUNTER-BALANCE A SOVIET PRESENCE WHICH MANY FEAR WILL BECOME OVERPOWERING OVER TIME.

2. IN CONVERSATION LAST WEEK WITH DCM, HOLST SPOKE FRANKLY OF DESIRABILITY OF HAVING U.S. OIL RIGS OFF SVALBARD--NOT ONLY AS A DEMONSTRATION OF AMERICAN PRESENCE BUT ALSO BECAUSE THIS SORT OF INVOLVEMENT WOULD ENCOURAGE U.S. BRUEAUCRACY AND PUBLIC TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO WHAT IS HAPPENING OFF NORTH NORWAY. IN MARCH 21 DISCUSSION WITH DCM OF THIS GENERAL PROBLEM, BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN SAID HE WOULD BE VISITING SVALBARD NEXT WEEK AND PLANNED TO SPEND THREE WEEKS THERE THIS SUMMER, INCLUDING A VISIT TO THE SOVIET MINING COMMUNITIES. HE EXPRESSED SPECIAL INTEREST IN POSSIBILITY OF SOME STATEMENT BY U.S. SPOKESMAN WHICH WOULD UNDERSCORE U.S. INTEREST IN NORWAY'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER SVALBARD. HE ALSO NOTED DESIRABILITY OF HAVING AMERICAN SCIENTISTS ON SVALBARD, PARTICULARLY SINCE IT APPEARED LIKELY THAT SOVIET SCIENTISTS WILL BE REPRESENTED AT NEW SMALL SCIENTIFIC CENTER BEING SET UP BY NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE AT FORMER ESRO SITE AT NY ALESUND.

3. BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN SAID THAT IT WAS DECIDED HE SHOULD NOT ACCOMPANY BRATTELI TO MOSCOW (AS SOVIETS HAD SUGGESTED) SINCE THEN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE DIFFICULT TO AVOID SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS IN DEPTH ON SVALBARD AND JOINT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA. HE EXPLAINED THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL BE EXAMINING QUESTION OF SOVIET POLICY IN THE NORTH IN DETAIL AFTER BRATTELI VISIT AND ASKED WHETHER ANY WRITTEN STUDY OR IDEAS THE EMBASSY MAY HAVE COUND NOT BE FED INTO THE

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MINISTRY'S DISCUSSION--EITHER AT THE WORKING LEVEL, OR AT A HIGHER LEVEL IF EMBASSY IS NOT TOO CONCERNED THAT THIS COULD OVERLY COMMIT U.S. TO SPECIFIC COURSES OF ACTION. DCM REPLIED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR EMBASSY TO MAKE RESPONSIBLE CONTRIBUTION WITHOUG BOTH SOME MORE OFFICIAL EXPRESSION OF NORWEGIAN INTEREST AND SOME USG EVALUATION OF VARIOUS POTENTIAL COURSES OF ACTION-- BUT THAT HE WOULD REVIEW THE QUESTION WITH ME.

4. I PERSONALLY BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT U.S. SHOULD TAKE A MORE ACTIVE INTEREST IN WHAT TAKES PLACE ON SVALBARD AND IN THE BARENTS SEA, SINCE IT WOULD SEEM CLEARLY TO BE AGAINST OUR SECURITY INTERESTS TO ALLOW USSR TO ESTABLISH ITS DOMINANCE IN THAT AREA. NORWAY IS UNDERSTANDABLE PLAYING THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF A SMALL POWER TRYING TO BALANCE A LARGE ALLY OFF AGAINST A LARGE NEIGHBOR. REGARDLESS OF NORWEGIAN MOTIVATION, WE HAVE OUR OWN REASONS FOR WISHING TO STRENGTHEN NORWAY'S DETERMINATION TO DEFEND ITS SECURITY INTERESTS AND SOVEREIGNTY IN THE NORTH. WE WOULD AGREE, HOWEVER, WITH A POINT MADE BY BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN, THAT WE SHOULD AVOID ANY APPEARANCE OF SUDDEN AND EXCESSIVE AMERICAN INTEREST IN SVALBARD AND THE BARENTS SEA SINCE THIS WOULD LIKELY TO COMPLICATE SOVIET-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS. THE POLICY SHOULD BE ONE OF GRADUAL INCREASED INVOLVEMENT BY THE U.S. AND OTHER SIGNATORY COUNTRIES.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: WE ARE SENDING BY SEPTTEL A LIST OF POSSIBLE MEASURES WHICH MIGHT STRENGTHEN NORWEGIAN BACKBONE AND ACT AS A DETERRENT AGAINST EXCESSIVE USSR PRESSURE OR EFFORTS TO INCREASE SOVIET PRESENCE IN THE NORTH. THE DEPARTMENT'S EARLY COMMENTS ON THE DESIRABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF THESE VARIOUS STEPS WOULD BE APPRECIATED.  
BYRNE

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